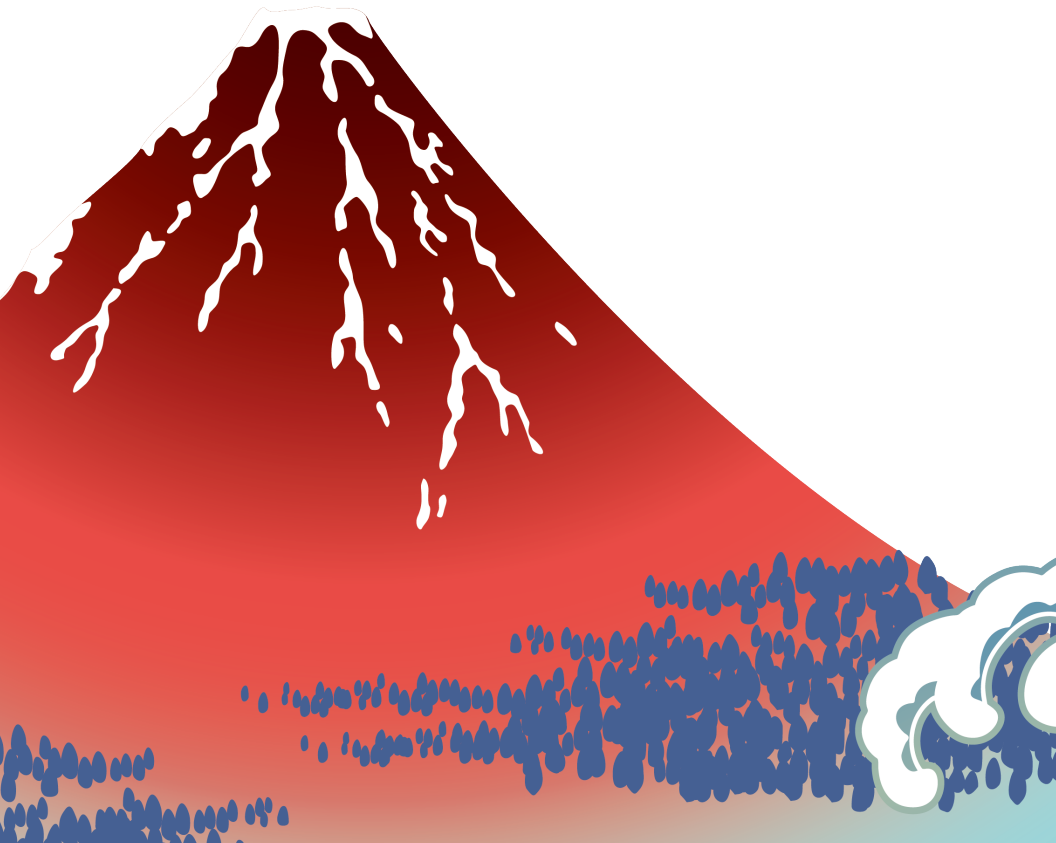


BARGER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

**ALA: 370 MINDFULNESS AND PEACE
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP**

JAPAN



MAY 7 - MAY 27, 2025

**Japan Center for Michigan Universities
Hikone, Shiga Prefecture, Japan**

THE BARGER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Barger Leadership Institute (BLI) is the home for immersive and interdisciplinary undergraduate leadership experiences at the University of Michigan. Here, we take a holistic approach to help you explore, nurture, and realize your authentic leadership potential.

Through the power of empathy, understanding, and mindfulness, we explore a leadership approach based on dedicated practice, deep human connection, and inspiration. With a balance of high-touch mentorship and real-world autonomy, BLI offers a certificate, classes, fellowships, and more—all designed to enhance and elevate the full Michigan educational experience.

BLI is far more than a resume builder. It's the realization of leadership potential in all aspects: social, situational, relational, and cultural. We're not merely offering a skill set; we help instill a mindset—one that will serve students throughout their education, career, and life.



INTRODUCTION

In most stories of individual leadership development, there is a moment where someone - a mentor, a boss, a friend - opens a door. We hope to give BLI students just these kinds of experiences. Access to real, unvarnished examples of leadership allows students to begin to make sense of the complex tasks and skills contemporary leaders must bring to bear on the world.

In spring 2025, ten students join BLI Director Ram Mahalingam for a three-week course at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) in Hikone, Japan for **ALA 370: Mindfulness and Peace Global Leadership**.

The main goal of this course is to provide a critical interdisciplinary perspective for mindful leadership, drawing from mindfulness research in psychology, creativity, and humanistic management. Students will develop a holistic perspective on Global Peace Leadership to navigate the leadership challenges of an increasingly disconnected and divided community around the globe.

Students will learn about current research on mindful leadership while learning several mindfulness practices with a specific goal of cultivating interconnectedness at three levels: intrasectional (deeper connection to one's emotions, thoughts, and feelings), intersectional (deeper connection to others who embody different social identities) and ecological level (deeper connection to nature). Building on these foundational practices, students will learn about engaged mindful leadership, exploring how mindfulness practices can enable them to be more authentic, open, and engaged mindful leaders who can lead with compassion, generosity, and cultural humility, promoting peace and harmony in their communities.

ITINERARY

Wednesday
MAY
7

Travel

Thursday
MAY
8

Hikone

The Japan Center For
Michigan Universities (JCMU)

Orientation
Bike Tour
Class

Friday
MAY
9

Hikone

Hikone Castle Tour
Lunch at the University of
Shinga Prefecture

Monday
MAY
12

Hiroshima

World Friendship Center

Tuesday
MAY
13

Hiroshima

World Friendship Center

Hibakusha Talk
Living with Father:
A Monodrama
Peace Memorial Park Tour
Peace Memorial Museum
A-Bombed Trees Tour

Wednesday
MAY
14

Hiroshima

World Friendship Center

Thursday
MAY
15

Hikone

JCMU

Class
International Leadership
Institute Speaker

Friday
MAY
16

Hikone

JCMU

Class
Chōshō-in Temple
Zazen Meditation

Monday
MAY
19

Hikone

JCMU

Class

Tuesday
MAY
20

Hikone

JCMU

Tea Ceremony
Class

Wednesday
MAY
21

Hikone

JCMU

Sumi-e Workshop
with Mr. Takahashi
Class

Thursday
MAY
22

Hikone

JCMU

Class

Friday
MAY
23

Shiga

Daifuku, Hini Arata Kan
Demo Center

Monday
MAY
26

Hikone

JCMU

Class

Tuesday
MAY
27

Travel

EXPERIENCES AND SITES

The Japan Center For Michigan Universities

The Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) was established in 1989 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of sister-state relations between the U.S. State of Michigan, and Shiga Prefecture in Japan. JCMU is located in the historical and cultural city of Hikone, on the shore of Lake Biwa. Its facilities consist of two buildings constructed by Shiga Prefecture. The academic building contains classrooms, a library, a Computer Assisted Learning Laboratory (CALL), Apple Hall, the Shahakunage Room (a traditional Japanese-style room), conference rooms, offices. The residential building contains 27 apartments designed to accommodate a total of 52 students. www.jcmu.net

Hikone Castle

Hikone Castle is an Edo-period Japanese castle located in the city of Hikone, Shiga Prefecture, Japan. It is considered the most significant historical site in Shiga. After a construction period of 20 years, Hikone Castle was completed in 1622. The site has been protected as a National Historic Site since 1951. Hikone is one of only twelve castles in Japan with its original tenshu, and one of only five castles with buildings listed as National Treasures. The castle's main keep, most of the inner moats, walls, guard houses and gates also remain intact. www.japan-guide.com

World Friendship Center

The World Friendship Center is a not-for-profit peace organization founded in 1965 in Hiroshima Japan by Barbara Reynolds. It provides a place where people from many nations can meet, share their experiences and reflect on peace. Their motto is "to foster peace, one friend at a time." www.wfchiroshima.org

Hibakusha

Atomic Bomb survivors are referred to in Japanese as hibakusha, which translates literally as “bomb-affected-people”. Many hibakusha not only suffered ill health due to radiation exposure and surviving a nuclear bomb, but also were subjected to discrimination. In spite of their difficulties, many hibakusha are examples of turning personal tragedies into a struggle to promote peace and to create a world free of nuclear weapons. www.hibakushastories.org

Living with Father: A Monodrama

Tatsushi Amano, a seasoned actor originally from Tokyo, discovered the play in a bookstore in 2008 and began memorizing the dialogues while working as a taxi-driver. He first performed the play in 2009 and since then has presented it more than 150 times in Japan and abroad, including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

Before the bomb, the area of what is now the Peace Park was the political and commercial heart of the city. Four years to the day after the bomb was dropped, it was decided that the area would not be redeveloped but instead devoted to peace memorial facilities. The park features the A-Bomb Dome, Cenotaph for the A-Bomb and the Peace Memorial Museum. www.japan-guide.com

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum displays artifacts that remain from the atomic bombing, in order to convey the harsh reality of the time, and the dangers of nuclear weapons. The museum has been open since 1955 with the goal of promoting peace in the hope that history will not be repeated. <https://hpmuseum.jp/>

Chōshō-in Temple

Chōshō-in is a temple of the Sōtō Zen sect located in the center of Hikone. <https://visit-omi.com/>

Zazen is Japanese name given to the seated meditation. While zen meditation may refer to walking meditation or various forms of mental training, zazen directly refers to meditating by sitting with the sole focus on breathing, posture and calmness. <https://mai-ko.com/>

Tea Ceremony

The tea ceremony is known as chanoyu, or sado, in Japanese, and the art and performance of preparing and presenting matcha powdered green tea is called otemae. The tea ceremony is considered one of the three classical arts of Japanese refinement and, alongside kodo incense appreciation and kado flower arranging, can be traced back to Zen Buddhism in the year 815. <https://www.japan.travel/en/us/>

Sumi-e

The Japanese term “sumi” means “black ink”, “e” means “painting”. Sumi-e, is the embodiment of Japanese aesthetics. Using just simple black ink and carefully curated white space, sumi-e captures the timeless beauty and complexity of the natural world. <https://japanobjects.com/>

Daifuku, Hini Arata Kan

The full-scale material handling and logistics demo center Hini Arata Kan features the range of advanced technology that Daifuku, a leading material handling company, has developed over 80 years of operation. Visitors experience Daifuku’s latest, in-house developed and manufactured, cutting-edge systems, along with products capable of integrating with Daifuku systems. www.daifuku.com/

COHORT



Lidia Cappelletti

Lidia Cappelletti is a junior studying Business with a minor in Law, Justice, and Social Change. She hopes to pursue a career in consulting. Currently, Lidia is involved in Michigan Taekwondo Club, Michigan Political Consulting, and her church. She enjoys listening to music, watching F1, and reading. Lidia is extremely excited to deepen her understanding of leadership that is people-centered and peace focused.

She thinks being immersed in a new culture allows for increased learning and deepen her understanding of what it means to lead in a diverse and interconnected world. Lidia is extremely excited about the journey ALA 370 will take her on and the growth I will get to experience alongside the cohort.



Bella Di Fiori

Bella Di Fiori is entering her 3rd year studying Psychology in the school of LSA. She became involved with the BLI and interested in peace leadership after attending the Mindful Leadership Retreat in the Fall of 2023. She is now heavily involved at the BLI, entering her 3rd semester working as a Leadership Teaching Fellow. In addition, next semester, she will join the Social Transformation Fellowship and Leadership Certificate Cohort #5. She

also is involved in the Greek Life community, acting as the Philanthropy Chairwoman of her sorority chapter and a member of the Panhellenic Philanthropy Committee. In her free time she enjoys volunteering with local youth, spending time in the Arb, writing poetry, and trying new Ann Arbor restaurants out with her friends.



Tess Carichner

Tess Carichner is a senior honors nursing student who will continue her education as a member of the Nursing PhD program at the University of Michigan School of Nursing in Fall 2025. As the leader of Disability Justice @ Michigan and a member of the Digital Accessible Future Lab, Tess' academic focus and passion lies within disability and health justices. Her interest in peace leadership has been encouraged both by the local Veterans for Peace chapter, the BLI

Leadership Certificate and her time spent at the Ann Arbor VA ICU as a critical care senior nursing student. Tess' use of the arts as both biological and social science communication has materialized in multiple publications, such as the Accessing Disability Culture (ITALICIZE) anthology and her multimedia collage, "Let Me Show You Something." Tess will continue her artistic efforts during her study abroad as a recipient of the Stamps School Kelly McKinnell Memorial Award.



Shawn Kelly

Shawn Kelly is a rising junior at the University of Michigan majoring in political science and education. He is immensely interested in political theory and constitutional law. Upon graduation, Shawn aspires to attend law school and work in public policy. In his free time, he enjoys watching movies and hanging out with friends.



Samantha Howden

Samantha Howden is a rising senior at the University of Michigan studying Economics and Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences. She also choreographs for a student ballet collective and mentors with the Society of Women in Economics. Her combined quantitative and creative experiences fuel her work with the Barger Leadership Institute, where she recently completed the Leadership Certificate Program in

partnership with M-Lead. Samantha co-facilitates three courses on mindful leadership and followership for social transformation. Guided by her interest in economics and game theory, Samantha approaches leadership and followership as two interdependent forces shaped by decision-making and collective action. As a 2025 Peace Leadership Fellow, she continues to explore how economic models can illuminate the dynamics of leadership, followership, and our capacity to connect at scale.



Felix Lahann

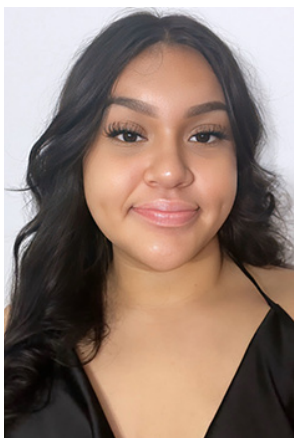
Felix Lahann is a rising junior at the University of Michigan studying Economics with a minor in data science. He is deeply interested in leadership development and global peace-building, which led him to apply for the Mindfulness and Peace Global Leadership Retreat. As an Applied Leadership Fellow at the Barger Leadership Institute, he helps manage grants that support student-driven initiatives, while his role

as President of the RC Debate Forum allows him to foster inclusive dialogue across different perspectives. He is committed to growing as a leader by building skills in conflict resolution, mindfulness, and cross-cultural understanding, and is excited to deepen this journey through immersive learning experiences in Japan.



Eliza Phares

Eliza Phares is a rising senior at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy studying public policy with a minor in writing. On campus, she writes opinion columns for the Michigan Daily, is a Graham Sustainably Scholar, and is a Ginsberg Center Community Leadership Fellow. She's interested in learning more about the intersection between peace leadership and international relations and to apply that knowledge to her public policy coursework.



Keyla Garcia-Rodriguez

Keyla Garcia-Rodriguez is a rising junior at the University of Michigan, a Pre-Law Sociology major with a submajor in Law, Justice, and Social Change, and minors in Urban Studies and Community Action and Social Change. A first-generation college student, she is a proud alumna of Wolverine Pathways and the SOUL (Sociology Opportunities for Undergraduate Leaders) programs. Inspired by her own experience

navigating the immigration system, Keyla hopes to become an immigration lawyer. She works at the Washtenaw County Racial Equity Office as a Social Media Engagement Curator and serves as the Communications Director for La Casa, after previously serving as its Social Media Chair. In her free time, she enjoys creating social media content and spending time with her 5-year-old son Ezekiel, family, and friends. Keyla joined the Mindfulness & Peace Leadership program to deepen her self-understanding and grow as a leader who can better advocate for others. She feels incredibly blessed to be part of this cohort, and is especially excited that her first trip abroad will take her to Japan—a longtime dream for this Fast & Furious fan.

BLI STAFF



Ramaswami Mahalingam

Ram Mahalingam received his PhD in Developmental Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh. Originally he was trained as a civil engineer and held more than 12 different jobs (math tutor, film script writer, children's theater activist, poet, writer, lecturer, night watchman, dish washer, cook, book stacker and preschool teacher) including being a structural engineer for 8 years before becoming a psychologist. Currently, he is a Professor of Psychology in the Personality and Social Contexts program, a core faculty member of the Psychology and Women's Studies joint PhD program, director for the Barger Leadership Institute and director for the Mindful Connections Lab.

His research is centered around intersectionality — the way that different identities we embody intersect shape how we make sense of our lives. In his empirical work, he conceptualizes intersectionality in three distinct ways. First, he explores intersectionality as a lived experience, focusing on encounters and stressors for those with marginalized identities based on gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, sexuality, occupation, and class. Second, he studies intersectionality as identities in contexts. Third, he views intersectionality as a critical social awareness of privilege and marginality for differing identities. With this overarching framework, he pursues three lines of research: (a) Dignity and Invisibility in workplace with a specific focus on janitors in India, US and South Korea; (b) Mindfulness, social justice and leadership with a focus on interconnectedness; (c) Relationship between cell phones and self.



Shea Ankers

Shea coordinates global and domestic travel opportunities and manages grants and funding for student projects in the BLI. As a first-generation college student studying Neuroscience and Religion & Culture at Virginia Tech, Shea found her passion for interdisciplinary education. This led to a move to Michigan to pursue a professional degree at the University of Michigan. As a graduate student, Shea held positions in the

School of Information's Office of Academic & Student Affairs, as a researcher for University Responses to Sexual Assault on Campus, and as a Graduate Assistant for the BLI's Capstone Program. After receiving her Master's of Arts in Higher Education, she served as a Community Center Manager for Residence Education at Michigan.



Mary Schlitt

As the Associate Director, Mary oversees the strategic initiatives, collaborations, staff, and resources of the Institute. With her team, the institute provides leadership courses, co-curricular programs, travel, and funding opportunities to nearly 900 undergraduate students across campus. As a leader, her ultimate goal is to model and promote a positive workplace where people are trusted and seen as

whole individuals. She works to pair people with projects that build on personal strengths and align with the BLI's purpose as the home for immersive and interdisciplinary undergraduate leadership experiences at Michigan. Mary holds a Master of Public Administration and a bachelor's in psychology from the University of Michigan. Her background includes more than 15 years of professional fundraising and non-profit leadership for Food Gatherers, the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art, and the Girl Scout Council of Greater Minneapolis.

MINDFUL MINDSET

BLI director, Ram Mahalingam, developed a mindful mindset framework drawing from Buddhism, critical intersectionality theory, and social justice perspective. A mindful mindset refers to a worldview that our lives are interconnected at the intersectional and phenomenological levels and that our identities are fluid, intersectional, and interdependent.



Compassion

Our capacity to understand the suffering of others and act upon it.

Sympathetic joy

Our capacity to rejoice with the happiness of others.

Situated intersectional awareness

An awareness that our identities are multifaceted, socially situated with varying degrees of privileges, which offer possibilities for identifying similarities and coalitions forming across seemingly different categories.

Negative capability

Our ability to reside in a situation with an open mind and to experience the sensations, feelings, and emotions even when they are uncomfortable.

Cultural humility

A lifelong learning process of self-reflection and self-critique, whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture with an open mind but also reflect on their own beliefs about their identity.

Wonder

A key ingredient in the revitalization of our life goals and aspirations to reduce inequality; to experience the miracle of seeing something miraculous in the familiar.

Generosity

Our ability to be generous while keeping the self-worth of the recipient of our kindness intact.

LEADERSHIP HABITS

A shared focus of BLI programs is the ten leadership habits. We invoke the idea of habit to signal that developing effective leadership takes sustained work and routine practice – until something becomes second nature. The Habits are crafted to be general and practiced with increasing complexity as circumstances require.

Start Where You Are

Leadership cannot be learned in the abstract. Start with the skills you have now and work to develop them.

Practices: Infuse vision with values; Begin with your strengths; Challenge your weaknesses; Embrace vulnerability

Collect, Combine, Create

Creativity is using what exists to do new things or to do old things in new ways. Collect and combine knowledge and skills that can be building blocks.

Practices: Cultivate surprise; Gather interesting things; Revisit sources of inspiration; Explore new ideas through creative practice

Build A Team

Leadership is a social activity. Important problems generally cannot be tackled alone. Build a team to create and implement a vision.

Practices: Work with and through others; Practice leadership roles (facilitator, decision-maker, follower, mediator); Attend to process; Communicate the vision

Start Small

Giant goals and formidable problems make it hard to start work. Concrete, complete, and implemented small successes build alliances and momentum for your projects.

Practices: Conduct leadership experiments; Put visions into real-world situations; Define achievable goals

Expect Challenges

Situations change. Plans often fail. People act in unexpected ways. Anticipate obstacles to increase your resilience.

Practices: Identify critical points; Develop a backup plan; Approach setbacks with an open mind; Seek productive skeptics

Engage The World

Important decisions are always made partially unseen. Look at what others have tried. Understand what your stakeholders value and need. Identify what is needed and act.

Practices: Explore your environment; Engage stakeholders; Make peace with ambiguity; Decide when to lead and when to follow

Always Ask

Authentic curiosity about people and situations is the hallmark of a good leader. Actively learn from all you encounter.

Practices: Ask first; Start with why; Search for problems and solutions; Use “yes, and;” Cultivate active listening

Value Difference

Teams with diverse skills, knowledge, and backgrounds define better problems and find more effective solutions.

Practices: Avoid self-replication; Seek out different perspectives; Let discomfort inspire; Acknowledge and remove barriers

Work To Learn

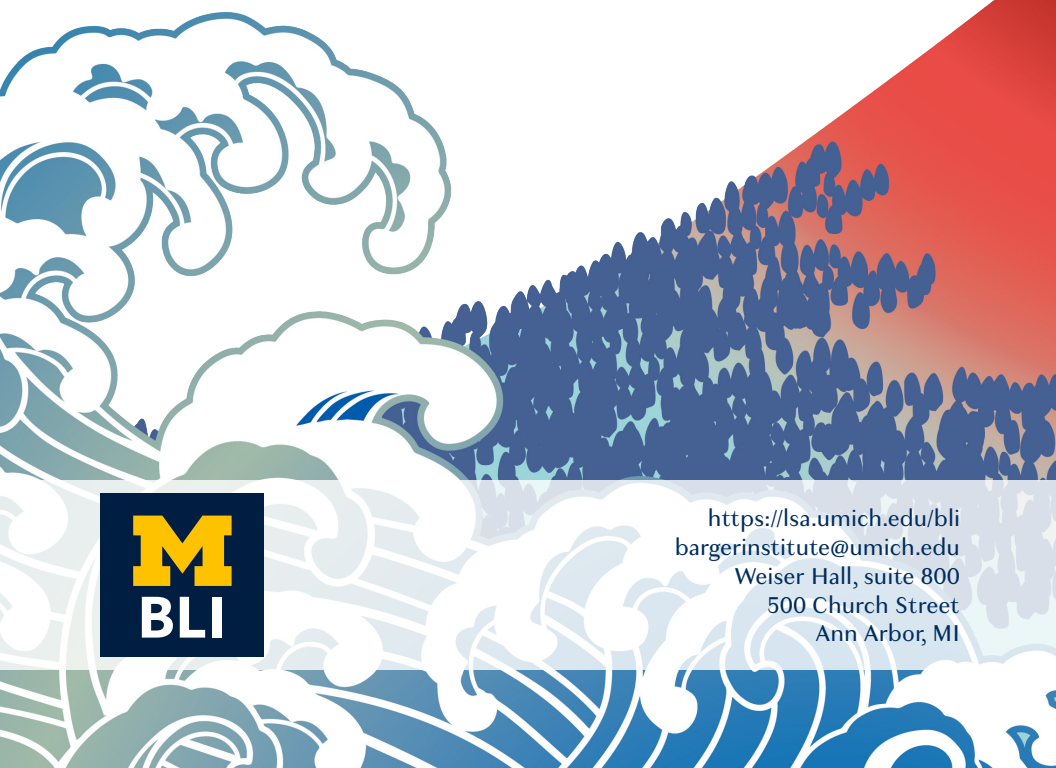
Talking together is great, but working together builds real, productive relationships. Action, thought, and reflection build leaders, but their order doesn't matter.

Practices: Take your first step; Capture the results; Alter your plans in response with input from others

Pause And Reflect

Exploring your experiences is key to learning for people, projects, and teams. Draw lessons across your activities.

Practices: Spend time alone, in solitude; Debrief often; Check process with your team; Have hard conversations; Work in and on your relationships



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